DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 088 841 SP 007 812

AUTHOR Hatfield, Robert C.
TITLE Conditions for Improving Teacher Evaluation.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50
DESCRIPTORS Evaluation Techniques; Performance Criteria; Self Evaluation; *Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Responsibility; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a discussion of critical aspects of teacher evaluation. The paper is based on the assumption that the purposes of teacher evaluation are as follows: a) to provide information with which to make a decision about granting tenure, b) to help teachers improve performance, and c) to improve the educational program of a school. Some general assumptions related to teacher evaluation, such as "teacher characteristics do not correlate with success," are listed and terminology defined. Seven critical aspects or needs of teacher evaluation are then listed and defined: a) competencies required of teachers; b) means for assessing competencies of individual teachers; c) establishment of goals by teachers reflecting both school and personal needs; d) identification of job responsibilities required of teachers; e) specification of authority, support, and situational variables affecting a teacher's responsibilities; f) procedures for periodic assessment of teacher competency and discharge of responsibility; and g) an established procedure for "coaching" the teacher, providing for self-improvement and evaluation that relates the assessed level of performance with criteria of competence and responsibility determined acceptable to the school. The remainder of the document discusses these points, using them as a basis for outlining conditions for implementing changes in teacher evaluation along with some new skills that may be needed by individuals who are providing leadership in developing such systems. (JA)

ED 088841

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

# CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVING TEACHER EVALUATION

Robert C. Hatfield

Teacher evaluation has generally been attacked at a simple level, probably much simpler than can be justified. Observing a teacher, filling out a rating scale of x number of items, and sometimes conferencing with the teacher, is essentially uncomplicated even though time consuming. This pattern seems to be a prevailing approach to dealing with teacher evaluation.

In the process of working on the specification of teacher competencies, which most everyone is now doing, it appears that the assessment of even one teacher behavior, which one can positively state is being demonstrated at a specified level of competence, is difficult and usually requires more than one source of data. Perhaps we have tried to simplify too much or perhaps the constraints of time and our general lack of reliable research data has distorted our perspective and hindered the development of a major component for educational improvement.

Teacher evaluation can be conducted for a variety of reasons and can serve many functions for a school system and for individual people. To me three major purposes serve as the primary bases for the development and the improvement of this activity. These purposes are (a) to make a decision about granting tenure, (b) to help a teacher improve her/his performance, and (c) to improve the educational program of a school. It is necessary to make this kind of a decision before attempting the development of a system for teacher evaluation so they can serve as a means for determining if the required activities are worth the time and effort being spent.

In reviewing this topic it will be helpful to look at (a) some critical aspects of teacher evaluation, (b) some procedures for developing a system of

SP 007 812

teacher evaluation, and (c) some skills needed by administrators in the implementation of such a system.

It can be said that "there is always an easy solution to every human problem - neat, plausible, and wrong" (Mencken). Whatever is said here about teacher evaluation may very well fit this statement. Even if some neat and plausible ideas can be identified our research base for teacher evaluation is meager and consequently can be all wrong. Nevertheless, there are very significant and necessary reasons for doing the best we can.

Here are some general assumptions related to teacher evaluation:

1. Teacher characteristics do not correlate with success.
2. Evaluation is situational and does not have a fixed standard.
3. Evaluation of pupils to determine teacher success is questionable.
4. Some evidence indicates a teacher's performance declines after 5 years.
5. Teacher behavior is consistent and can be predicted.
6. Teacher behavior is observable.
7. Differences exist in teacher behavior.
8. There is not a good and bad teacher in any final sense.

These assumptions need to be carefully considered as questions arise in developing procedures for evaluation.

In considering some critical aspects of teacher evaluation suggestions will be given for major provisions that an evaluation system should include in order to meet the purposes previously stated plus an elaboration on these areas suggesting some details along with limitations. The critical aspects described here are to provide for:

1. Competencies required of teachers.
2. Means for assessing competencies of individual teachers.
3. Establishment of goals by teachers reflecting both school and personal needs.
4. Identification of job responsibilities required of teachers.

5. Specification of authority, support, and situational variables affecting a teacher's responsibilities.
6. Procedures for periodic assessment of teacher competency and discharge of responsibility.
7. An established procedure for "coaching" the teacher, providing for her/his self-improvement and evaluation which relates the assessed level of performance with criteria of competence and responsibility determined acceptable to the school.

These provisions can serve as a guide to the actual procedure for teacher evaluation which is developed. Before discussing these provisions, however, there are within statements given terms which take on special meaning in the present context. Some clarification of these terms as used here will help communication as others may be using them in different ways. Important words which relate to teacher evaluation seem to be - competency, responsibility, goals, assessment, evaluation, appraisal, and accountability.

A competency refers to teacher behaviors which are basic to the teaching process. Examples include: Develop a sequence of instructional activities for teaching an educational objective which is based on psychological principles of learning; another is to utilize intervention strategies in a classroom to maintain the attending behavior of individual students on a designated task.

A teacher's responsibility is to fulfill the demands of his job as delegated to him. The primary responsibility for most teachers would be the learning of his pupils, another might be the selection of instructional materials for a set of courses.

Goals represent statements specifying the responsibilities assigned to a particular teacher and goals developed for the personal development of a teacher. A job related goal could be - The development of a materials and resource library for seventh grade geography by June, 1974 which includes films, pictures, transparencies,

and pamphlets for each major topic in the course. A personal goal could be - will attain the skills needed by June, 1974 to use a variety of questions in leading group discussions so that the pupils will be required to combine ideas they have learned and to give a value judgement about these newly combined ideas.

An assessment represents the collection of data describing the status of a teacher's performance or attainment of goals at a given time. An assessment of a teacher's skill in evaluation might identify that all pupil evaluation is done by paper-pencil objective type tests.

The evaluation and/or appraisal of this assessment would require that someone decide if the use of all paper-pencil objective type tests met the criteria for competency in the given situation.

The accountability of a teacher is then determined on the basis of the evaluation. The teacher may be accountable to his pupils, to parents, to the school, and to himself. The current movement in education is to hold the teacher accountable for the complete discharge of his responsibilities to the people and institutions mentioned.

The distinction between the concepts described by these terms is very helpful in developing improvement in teacher evaluation. If we separate assessment from evaluation and if we identify teacher competencies and responsibilities we have a much better chance of determining the extent to which each teacher is accountable to pupils, to the school, etc.

Now we can take a more detailed look at the provisions for teacher evaluation previously stated. The first of these is - competencies required of teachers.

Stating teacher competencies is a big thing in education right now but just because we are giving it the spotlight is no guarantee that dramatic new ideas regarding teacher behavior will result. Essential elements of this movement which may provide new insights are newly proposed models from which to identify competencies and the means for their assessment. There have been a number of such models proposed

for the actual teaching process, most of which are quite similar. There have also been several suggestions for the broader areas of teacher evaluation that are not limited to actual classroom interactions. I will suggest a combination of these broad categories and a teaching process which incorporates much of the current thinking. Such a model will provide us with a base on which to develop specific competencies and perhaps indicate where emphasis needs to be placed.

One set of categories encompassing the range of teacher evaluation is:

a) Attitudes and beliefs.

b) General and professional knowledge

c) Skill in teaching practice

d) Professional actions

e) Outcomes of teaching

f) Self-evaluation and solving problems

In the process of describing what I mean by each of these categories I will also suggest those items which have been determined as being more important to consider as a competency.

The affective area is indicated as attitudes and beliefs. Both Combs[1] and Ryan[2] have identified some behaviors in this category which are worth considering. These behaviors relate to: child vs. academic orientation, favorable attitudes towards students, and emotional adjustment. It is possible to identify and predict a teacher's behavior in each of these areas, consequently, they can be developed into specifically stated competencies.

Because teaching is basically a social interaction among people the importance of this category in teacher evaluation has nearly always been given a high priority. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to support the character traits or behaviors that evaluators have used in the past in determining the success of teachers in general.

The category for general and professional knowledge can be specified in greater detail with little difficulty and can be quite easily assessed.

Competencies needed for carrying out the specific practices of teaching are being ordered into various teaching models which should aid in assessing, researching, and communicating about them. One such model providing a description of this process is:

a) State the educational objectives.

b) Pre-assess pupil's development, and learning variables.

c) Develop on instruction strategy.

d) Manage the instruction.

e) Evaluate pupil learning.

This list of major activities required in teaching can serve as a basis for the selection of specific competencies which will represent a fairly comprehensive view of the teaching act, however, it does not reduce the teaching process to any one philosophy. The assessment of a teacher's performance in all of these areas is not common, and as such, the possibilities for teacher improvement in some of the essential parts of teaching has been limited.

In the category of professional actions are included the general work behaviors of a teacher, the involvement in professional activities, and activities that are school related such as curriculum development and working with community groups.

The outcomes of teaching are of two types, those which relate to the designated educational objectives and those which accrue because of the situation and personal experiences of the students. There is considerable concern about using data like this in teacher evaluation, particularly as it is derived from standardized tests. Very little research supports reliable relationships between this data and other measures for selecting successful teachers. Still it seems necessary to include so here are some suggestions for using the results of pupil learning in evaluation. One suggestion includes the use of prescribed educational objectives which provides for measurements directly related to those objectives

but with evaluation delayed for a time after the completion of instruction. It is crucial to consider the situational variables such as the type of course, the importance of the course in the curriculum, the social behaviors of the pupils, and the level of pupil's general achievement. It is also important, however, that other areas related to the overall teacher assessment constantly be related to this one. The weight given to its inclusion in an evaluation scheme will be an important decision to make.

The final category for the development of teacher competencies is self-evaluation and solving problems. This area is extremely crucial in the overall program as it relates more to the purposes of teacher improvement and school improvement which should be the long range goals of teacher evaluation.

Within these six major categories is the potential for establishing a comprehensive statement of competencies and for hitting directly at the teaching practice itself. There is also an opportunity to separate more clearly those areas which can be assessed through direct observation and those which can be assessed by other means such as; reviewing a teacher's records, looking at visible products, identifying the results of professional in-service work, and testing.

These suggestions for assessment lead to the second critical aspect which is the means for assessing the competencies of individual teachers. As was stated earlier when specific behaviors are identified as competencies the collection of data on which to make an evaluation is sometimes very extensive. Such a situation probably implies the need for a program of data collection on different competencies over an extended period of time.

By defining the teacher evaluation process as including several phases and by distinguishing between assessment and evaluation this phase serves only to collect the data. Because of this purpose it is possible to envision its being carried out by more than just one person. For example, for those competencies

requiring observation a team within a school might be designated and trained for this purpose.

One of the common concerns about using observation is that people don't believe two or three observations can serve as a reliable basis for assessment. One means for checking out the people doing the observation is to see if they can predict what a given teacher will do in a given situation. If they can predict behavior they have probably observed that teacher for a sufficient period of time.

Another dimension of the assessment phase is that of using a variety of means to collect data and not primarily observation, again considering that long term purposes are of key importance in teacher evaluation. The notion of a teacher observed by a supervisor, followed by a conference, with a resulting expectation that a change in teacher behavior will occur is not very accurate.

Based on this perspective, it seems important to determine effective means for securing assessment data. One common means used in medicine is the review of records. Granted we don't have the extensive records in education that medicine does, but still we have some. If we have a competency dealing with the use of pre-assessment procedures of pupils, for example, there should be some indication in a student's file, a grade book, or a plan book indicating either the results or action taken on the basis of that pre-assessment, if one was in fact carried out.

Another source of data is sometimes referred to as the products of teaching, in this case not the students, but the visible materials developed. A review of bulletin boards, printed units, instructional materials, constructions, and instructional plans is possible in most cases. Other means for assessment may be indicated by the stated competencies as they are developed.

The next critical issue relates to assignment of responsibilities (which should be based on an assessment of the teachers competence) and/or establishing

goals for individual teachers. To make this phase most meaningful an integration of school related goals and personal teacher goals should be developed. The first implication here is that the school has goals stated clearly enough that they can be used in this manner. It is expected that such goals would be specific enough for a teacher to deal with in the course of a years time. In addition to student learning there are generally many more expectations for a teacher which can be included in the description of responsibilities. Areas such as committee work, course revision, providing for directions to substitutes, and advising students represent some examples. In the designation of goals the means for assessment and standards of performance need to be stated.

In addition teachers have a great reluctance to be held accountable for any responsibilities when they have been given little authority and control over the situation in which they work. It is, therefore, a major issue in evaluation to either provide for and substantially agree on what these situations will be or to have a very unsatisfied teacher who feels he is being dealt with unfairly. This issue represents an added dimension to the designation of responsibilities and goal setting.

Additional phases in the total evaluation process represented here by critical aspects require that a periodic assessment be made of both teacher competence and the discharge of his responsibilities. In this way it will be possible to provide the teacher with some "coaching," for self-improvement and analysis of personal goals, as well as determining the in-service needs. In carrying out this type of activity teachers are provided feedback on their teaching. The most effective feedback should include several conditions which are significant for attaining the maximum amount of behavioral change. Teachers can and do change their teaching behavior but change substantially more when the following are provided:

a) Critiquing by peers

b) Team planning and interaction

c) Video and audio tape playback

d) Pupil comments

e) Analysis of problems and outcomes of teaching

On the basis of feedback obtained through the assessment procedures it is advantageous to establish in-service activities to provide for teachers and school improvement which meet the conditions that have proven to be successful. Rubin[3] suggest the following:

a) A team of 3-4 teachers cooperating in one building

b) Learning practices from a peer

c) A supportive administrator

d) The opportunity to learn specific practices with a visible payoff

The implementation of these two dimensions in the evaluation process require some special skills by the staff and an organized plan for carrying out the activities.

The last critical aspect is evaluation to determine if the teacher has attained the set criteria for the performance of competencies and the discharge of his responsibilities. Using the kinds of procedures indicated the accountability of the teacher could be fairly established taking into account those things considered essential for the particular district, the particular teaching situation, and other staff in the school.

These critical aspects of teacher evaluation have been described in an order which can serve as a guide for working through the evaluation of a teacher. The second topic to discuss is that of developing the program for teacher evaluation. It is equally obvious that under todays conditions the professional staff will be heavily involved in such a development. Nevertheless, because we are talking about a change from the present procedure one of the first concerns will be that of a motivation and reward system conducive to bringing about such a change. This reward system will need to insure support to the teacher and recognition of his accomplishments

through personal praise, public and peer recognition, and follow-up on behavioral changes. Our business management friends have well established that when even a minimal level of salary is paid added money is not the greatest motivator but rather job related rewards. By building on this type of reward system greater interest will be created and will insure a higher payoff.

A system of evaluation, as suggested here, will in most cases require much preparation. Some of these areas are: (a) the development of important competency statements, (b) clarification of school goals, (c) delineation of teacher responsibilities, (d) setting standards and assessment procedures, (e) organization of an overall procedure and (f) training personnel in the required skills. Whether these are developed by committees, individuals, or are borrowed from outside sources it would be vital for each teacher and administrator to have considerable experience with these provisions before a serious attempt is made to employ such activities. It is also much easier to implement changes like this by taking certain parts of the whole which are seen as most crucial to a particular school and begin with those. Such a procedure makes it easier for each person involved in the process to gain an insight into changes before they become overpowering.

The final topic for consideration relates to the kinds of skills which are needed by administrators in using a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. In enumerating some of these skills required in meeting the critical issues listed in this paper, it is recognized that among a large group of administrators there will be a wide variation in skills at a given time. An individual would, therefore, need to determine for himself at what point he would need to improve his own competency.

The two concepts, management by objectives, and education by objectives have been central to this presentation and are rather widespread in our schools today. However, the skills in how to state such objectives, how to distinguish them from activities and how to assess their status are vitally necessary. Frequently these skills appear to be simple and not difficult to develop but as one works with the concepts their

significance and difficulty become more fully understood.

The idea of specifying teacher competencies which are important and which can be evaluated is one requiring a reordering of how most of us have looked at teaching. It requires an overview of teaching that has not generally been taught in our universities and one which is related to some type of research base. However, at the same time it is not difficult to find experienced teachers who follow similar steps in the teaching process. If these conditions aren't met, however, we find ourselves merely restating past and less useful ideas.

In conjunction with the stated competencies are assessment procedures that provide for collecting data that is both objective and subjective. We may need to learn some of the more objective means for assessment, and to make our subjective data stand we probably need to obtain a much greater amount of data. Skills in designing assessment tools and procedures will be needed as competencies are developed. It might be important, for instance, to document the interaction in a group discussion, analyze the types of questions asked, identify the kind of responses given, and determine the cohesiveness of a group. Such a situation may require some new skills if it is to be done objectively.

Because many of these suggestions require personal interaction and "coaching", skills in interpersonal relations may be needed. How to get a person to clarify a problem himself, how to interpret the affective communication he is giving, and how to set realistic goals are examples of skills needed.

The whole area of using different methods for providing feedback other than just telling a person what he did wrong is crucial and may include skills that some administrators have not used.

This paper has attempted to spell out some critical aspects of teacher evaluation today, some conditions for implementing changes in teacher evaluation, and some new skills which may be needed by individuals who are providing the leadership in developing such systems. Throughout the paper an attempt has been made to

insert specific ideas and suggestions which could be utilized within the framework of most teacher evaluation programs now being used and to suggest an overall procedure which is feasible if looked at in the total connotation of the purposes for teacher evaluation particularly if many of the current activities now being carried out in schools were reorganized into a unified group instead of separate parts.

As has been stated by a leading historian "Nothing is new except arrangement" (Durant).

## REFERENCES


1. Combs, Arthur, The Professional Preparation of Teachers, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965.

2. Ryan, David, Characteristics of Teachers: Their Description, Comparison, and Appraisal: A Research Study. Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1960.

3. Rubin, Louis, "A Study of the Continuing Education of Teachers", Santa Barbara, Calif.: University of California.